



Reversal of fortune  
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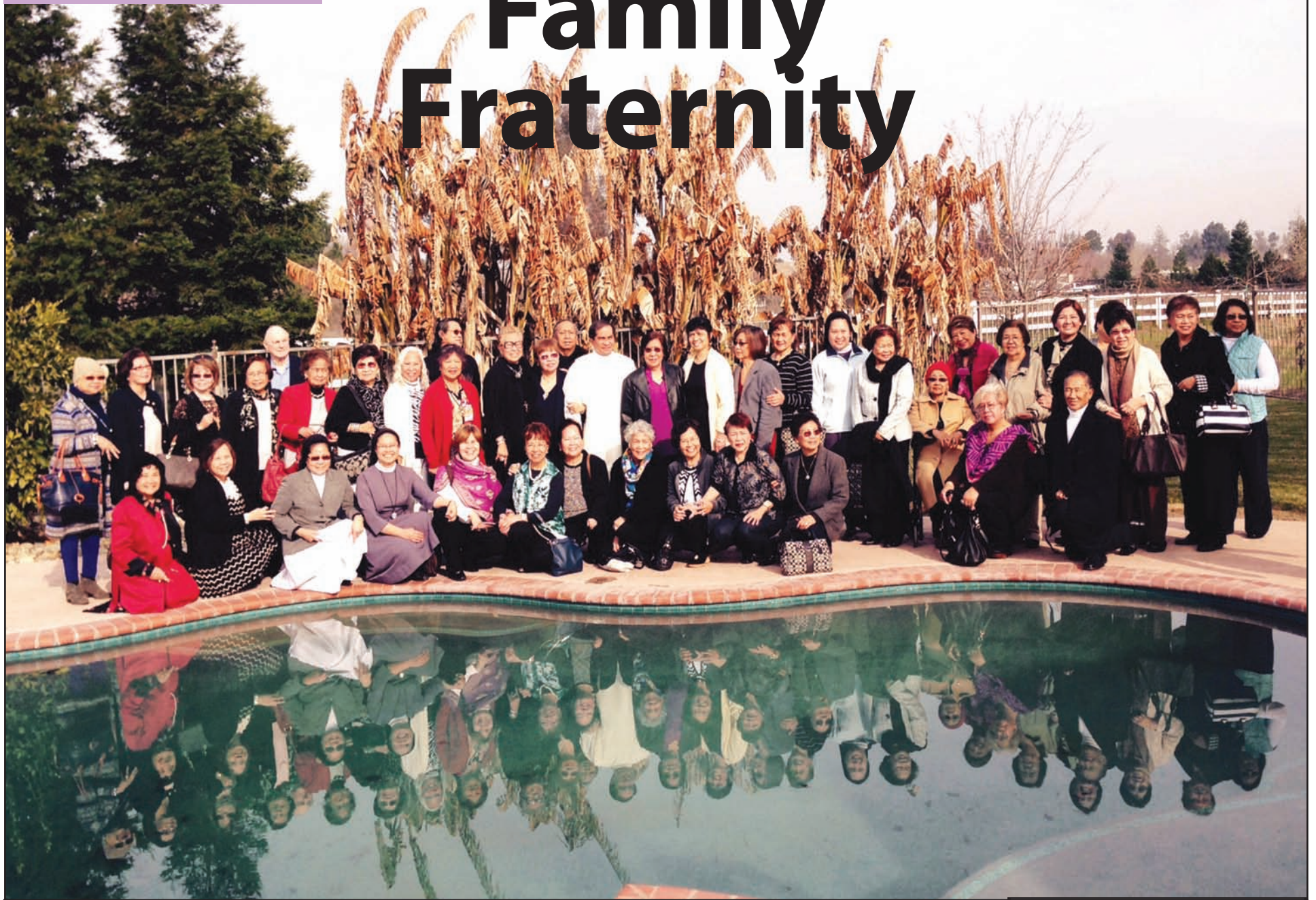
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## Reversal of fortune

By Ana Marie Pamintuan

On the 29th anniversary of people power, the reversals of fortune can make a movie good enough for the Oscars:

The other half of the conjugal dictatorship is an "honorable" member of the House of Representatives, still living it up and with all her relatives back in power. Her only son and Ferdinand Marcos' namesake is in the Senate and is seriously considering a run for the presidency.

Meanwhile, EDSA hero Juan Ponce Enrile is under "hospital arrest" without bail for large-scale corruption. His RAMBoys – members of the Reform the Armed Forces Movement linked to coup attempts during the post-EDSA Aquino presidency – have broken up in an ugly squabble reportedly over rebel amnesty money.

Billions in assets have been seized by or turned over to the Philippine government after being legally declared ill-gotten, but no one is in prison for accumulating the vast wealth illegally.

Several of the biggest Marcos cronies are fully rehabilitated, with their wealth and influence not only intact but also greater.

Many victims of human rights violations during the dictatorship have yet to receive several thousand pesos each as compensation for their suffering. The amount, though small, is considered symbolic and the payment precedent-setting. Meanwhile, Pinoys continue to vote for unapologetic human rights violators who

present themselves to be tough on crime.

Twenty-nine years after the people power revolt, there are groups trying to resuscitate the coup virus and are calling for the ouster or resignation of the only son of Benigno and Corazon Aquino. Their numbers are negligible, but the personalities are an interesting mix. They include Cory Aquino's younger brother and his wife plus a smattering of Catholic bishops.

Justice is elusive in this country under normal circumstances. Trying to make a regime account for its abuses during 14 years of authoritarian rule is even more complicated.

The fact that the quest for justice is difficult, however, should not mean giving up on it, which is what it looks like in the pursuit of accountability for abuses during the Marcos regime. After recovering several pieces of prime real estate in the United States and getting back millions of dollars in Swiss bank deposits, we have given up on the accountability part. Who deposited the ill-gotten funds in Switzerland? How come we're not going after the account holder/s?

We've kicked out a chief justice for failure to disclose dollar accounts. The Swiss bank deposits, including accumulated interest while in escrow, amount to a whopping \$683 million. The deposits were declared ill-gotten by Philippine courts, and Swiss authorities agreed. Why isn't any account holder



er behind bars, without bail, for plunder?

Our government has seized priceless original artworks of the masters from the Marcoses and is still running after more. How come no one is being summoned for a probe or charges being filed for possession of such treasures only a billionaire collector can afford? Were these assets declared? Did anyone ever explain how public officials in a developing country could afford to buy such treasures?

The most enduring legacy of EDSA is undeniable: democracy was restored, warts and all, and there's no going back to authoritarian rule. This is a remarkable feat worth celebrating every year. Young Filipinos will never live in fear of hearing a knock on their door at 3 a.m., of being dragged from their home and driven to unknown destinations where their worst nightmares await.

But building on the gains of people power and making democracy work have been a difficult slog. There is no magic wand for progress and inclusive growth.

People denounce the "kleptocracy" during the Marcos regime, but no one has been punished for corruption on

a scale so vast a new word had to be invented for it.

No human rights violator went to prison either. And whoever ordered the assassination of P-Noy's father Benigno Aquino Jr. is home free; not even two Aquino presidencies could give Nino justice.

Seeing everyone getting away with double murder, torture and enforced disappearances, world-class cor-

ruption and flouting of unexplained wealth is the biggest reason for the persistence of these abuses, 29 years after the Marcos regime finally collapsed.

The failure to make any account for the sins of the dictatorship has bred impunity. It has given rise to a common reaction when public officials are indicted and arrested for similar offenses: others are doing it, why pick on me?

When those occupying high positions in government are setting the example in stealing from taxpayers, they lose the moral authority to demand honest service from their subordinates. Economic growth does not trickle down to the grassroots in this country, but corruption does.

Failure to curb political dynasty-building has abetted corruption and brazen disre-

gard of laws against nepotism. The 2013 elections showed dynasty-building reaching shameless proportions, with clans wanting to corner not only all elective seats in their turfs but also in any place where they can claim some ancestry or early residency.

Dynasties also perpetuate patronage politics. P-Noy, as well-meaning as he is, belongs to the old rich and can only do so much to try to transform an entrenched system. When his countdown to noon of June 30, 2016 finally ends, he can say he did his best. But as the song goes, the best still wasn't good enough.

He would end his term four months after the 30th anniversary of the people power revolt. The EDSA movie could be a blockbuster, and it would leave many Pinoys in tears.



### Editor's Note

Deadline, due dates, schedules, appointments- these can make us all crazy, if we think about them. They can negatively affect us, in not having enough sleep, making shortcuts, having a messy house, and gaining weight from eating junk food. On a positive note, our busyness (not business), can make us achieve many things in life such as attaining a higher education, meeting new friends, and being entertained by going on fun trips, dancing, or working out at the gym. Whatever is the case, we should find some form of equilibrium or balance in everything that we do. Most of all, we must remain feeling

happy, empowered, and inspired!

Once again, Philippine Fiesta has done it again in bringing our readers exciting news about our Fil-Am community. But nothing, is as exciting, as hearing that Mayweather has signed a contract to fight our champ Manny Pacquiao, this 2nd of May! This will be the most exciting boxing fight of all time!

In the meantime, support the upcoming events in our community such as the Maharlika Lion's Club Fundraising Crabfeed, "Esperanza" means Hope, a play written by our very own Conrad Panganiban in support of My Sister's House, the Philippine Consulate on Wheels hosted by the Bayanihan Club of Sacramento, the book launch party of Maria Kang's "No More Excuses" diet book, the FCSV's Spring Fashion Extravaganza, and the Pangasinan Association's 65th Anniversary Dinner and Dance. And to all the celebrants-birthdays and all, congratulations!

With you in celebration,  
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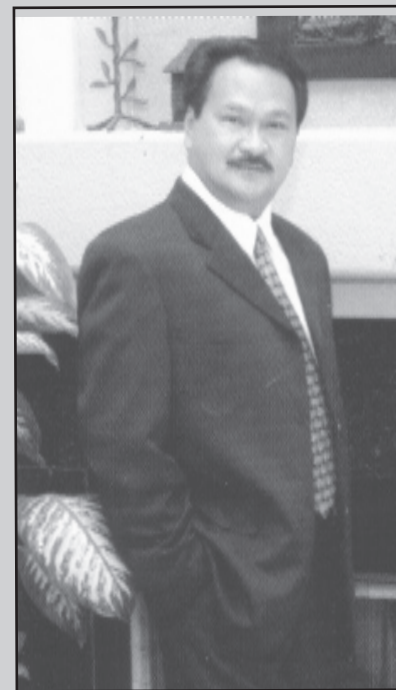
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# Aquino: Purisima lied to me

By Christian V. Esguerra

Manila, Philippines—Alan Purisima may have lied to him, but President Aquino apparently has no regrets entrusting to his close friend, although under suspension on corruption charges, the police operation in Mamasapano on Jan. 25 that cost the lives of 44 Special Action Force (SAF) commandos.

“I didn’t hear or see anything in him [Aquino] showing anything regarding regret,” Communications Secretary Herminio Coloma said Tuesday as the Senate wound up its inquiry into the tragic affair, during which Purisima himself finally admitted that he was in fact the “overall commander” of the project to take out a Malaysian terrorist nicknamed, “Marwan.”

“What I saw during the past month has been the determination of the President to find out the whole truth so that his understanding would be complete and this would guide him for future actions,” Coloma told reporters.

Purisima was under suspension as Philippine National Police director general when he gave “advice” to Director Getulio Napeñas, the SAF commander who was subsequently sacked, to take down Marwan (real name: Zulkifli bin Hir), who had a \$6-million bounty from the FBI, in the Maguindanao province marshland.

In a meeting with a group of congressmen on Monday, the President said that Purisima, who has resigned as PNP director general, lied to him about the unfolding tragedy in besetting “Oplan Exodus” in Mamasapano in their exchange of text messages in the early morning of Jan. 25.

### Transcript of text messages

Aside from saying he was deceived, the President said that his orders to inform the Armed Forces

of the Philippines and Deputy Director General Leonardo Espina, the PNP officer in charge, before the jump-off were not followed, according to select lawmakers who were present during the four-hour meeting in Malacañang.

Antipolo City Rep. Romeo Acop, a former general, said Aquino showed him and other lawmakers led by Speaker Feliciano Belmonte Jr. a transcript of the text messages between him and Purisima, who was in his rest house in Nueva Ecija at that time and getting his information from Napeñas.

Purisima also disclosed the same document to senators looking into the Mamasapano slaughter, which showed Aquino was being fed inaccurate information during the crucial hours of that fateful Sunday morning after the SAF troopers reportedly succeeded in killing Marwan and were battling for their lives against forces of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and its breakaway faction, the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters.

### Lack of urgency

Acop asked the President whether he was being given inaccurate information and quoted the President as replying: “They are not only inaccurate, they are lies. Don’t you think these are not lies with these?”

Acop said that the most striking things about Purisima’s messages to the President were his lack of urgency in getting military reinforcement for the retreating SAF troops and what he was relaying did not “jibe with what I knew was actually happening on the ground.”

Acop, however, did not ask the President when he realized he was being deceived.

Cagayan de Oro Rep. Rufus Rodriguez surmised that the President probably knew the dire situation of the SAF troops between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. when reports of the death toll started streaming in. Aquino was in Zamboanga City at the time, ostensibly to look into a bombing incident earlier in which



Palace: President seems not to regret entrusting control to ex-PNP chief

two people were killed.

### ‘Too polite’

“The President felt he was lied to by Purisima because the one texting him was Purisima, not Napeñas. He also said they did not follow orders,” Rodriguez said.

House Minority Leader Ronaldo Zamora said: “The President did not say Purisima or Napeñas were

during the meeting and that the President was “being careful with his words.”

Zamora said that while the President was able to clarify his participation in the Jan. 25 mission, he left unanswered why he was getting the information from Purisima who was more than a month into his six-month suspension from the Ombudsman at that point.



**BIRD’S EYE VIEW OF KILLING FIELD** The flat cornfields of Mamasapano town in Maguindanao province, where 44 commandos of the Philippine National Police Special Action Force were pinned down and killed on Jan. 25 in clashes with Moro rebels, as seen from a hovering drone. A team from the PNP board of inquiry investigating the botched police operation, accompanied by media workers, visited the area on Tuesday. In a meeting with a group of congressmen on Monday, the President said that Purisima, who has resigned as PNP director general, after the Mamasapano debacle, lied to him about the unfolding tragedy in besetting “Oplan Exodus” in Mamasapano in their exchange

liars, but he felt he deserves to be told the truth.”

Zamora also noted that the House delegation was “too polite”

### Speak to nation again

“He (President) did not go through regular channels, through the regular chain of command of the PNP.

He got everything from Purisima who was in Nueva Ecija, which was a strange place to be if you are directing a major operation. Why was a major operation done so casually? (The mission) fell apart because nobody knew how to deal with it,” Zamora said.

Both Zamora and Rodriguez agreed that the President should speak to the nation again and elaborate on his role in the mission. In his two previous national speeches, the President blamed the Mamasapano massacre on the lack of coordination and he even spoke of the difficulty of firing Purisima, his longtime friend.

Rodriguez said it took hours before the President knew of the real situation because he proceeded with his schedule in Zamboanga City that Sunday afternoon.

“He thought everything was going on course because the text said the Armed Forces were already supporting them,” Rodriguez said.

### ‘I need to stay calm’

Aquino on Tuesday defended his actions in the aftermath of the Mamasapano fiasco, reiterating his call for sobriety from a public furious over how authorities handled—or allegedly mishandled—the Jan. 25 operation.

On the eve of the 29th Edsa People Power anniversary when he also feted 10 outstanding youth organizations, the President cited his efforts to live by the lessons of the bloodless revolution: The need to promote the “interest of the majority, freedom from the crooked ways of the past and a better tomorrow for the next generation.”

He described as a “challenge” the Mamasapano incident.

“As President, I am doing everything as I face and attend to the problems of the nation,” he told his audience in Malacañang, citing problems such as the Mamasapano debacle.

“I cannot give in to my emotions because I might only make the problem worse. Each time, I need to stay calm and remember for whom these efforts of ours are,” he added, reiterating the same call for sobriety he made in a televised address on Feb. 6.



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## Iqbal: AFP, PNP members sold us weapons

By Patricia Lourdes Viray

MANILA, Philippines - The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) bought some of its weapons from members the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP), MILF chief peace negotiator Mohagher Iqbal revealed on Wednesday.



The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) used to have a weapon factory but abandoned it for the sake of the peace process, MILF chief peace negotiator Mohagher Iqbal said. The MILF also used to buy weapons from gun smugglers and some members of the military and police.

In an interview with the ABS-CBN News Channel, Iqbal explained where the MILF acquired its weapons.

“Tatlo ang pinanggagalingan ng armas namin - unang-una, binibili namin sa labas, sa mga gun smugglers... pangalawa, ‘yung armas na binili namin, karamihan diyan nanggagaling sa Armed Forces of the Philippines at saka PNP... binenta ng tauhan ng PNP, AFP,” Iqbal said.

Iqbal clarified that the MILF only bought firearms from AFP and PNP members during the term of former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

The MILF used to have its own firearms factory, which

they abandoned after the peace agreement with the government.

“Wala na po kaming arms factory dahil po kung sakaling ipasa ang BBL (Bangsamoro Basic Law), magdecommission na po ang MILF,” Iqbal explained.

Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano earlier grilled Iqbal during a Senate hearing on the Mamasapano incident over the alleged machineries and vast armaments maintained by the MILF.

The senator further accused the MILF of manufacturing high-powered firearms that were used during an encounter in Mamasapano, Maguindanao which led to the death of 44

police commandos. On the other hand, the MILF chief peace negotiator refused to disclose the number of firearms that the Moro group currently possesses.

Iqbal denied allegations that the MILF has a training camp in Sulu.

“May kampo kami noon pero ngayon, wala na po kaming kampo. We already abandoned the camping system... Wala na po kaming kampo ngayon,” Iqbal said.

Photos showing the alleged training and recruitment activities of the MILF in Sulu were presented during the Senate hearing on the Mamasapano clash last Tuesday.

## Japan, PHL navies to undertake capacity and capability building activities

Admiral Tomohisa Takei, Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force commander, who arrived in the country Monday for a four-day official visit “discussed concerns on maritime domain awareness and challenges” in the South China Sea with the Armed Forces of the Philippines deputy chief-of-staff Lt. Gen. Virgilio Doming. Admiral Takei also had a meeting with Philippine Defense Undersecretary Honorio Azcueta and Philippine Navy chief Vice Adm. Jesus Millan.



A senior Japanese navy official was in the country yesterday for high-level talks with the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) concerning the mounting maritime tension in the West Philippine Sea and other security concerns within the Asia-Pacific

Public affairs officer of the Philippine military Lt. Col. Harold Cabunoc said “they also expressed mutual interests in conducting bilateral naval exercises and disaster response operations in the future.”

Philippines and Japan’s defense chiefs “Memorandum on Defense Cooperation and Exchanges between the Ministry of Defense of

Japan and the Department of National Defense of the Republic of the Philippines” that will facilitate closer relationship between Japan Self-Defense Forces and Armed Forces of the Philippines in security and defense field last January.

“What we discussed are more on future interactions to develop our capacity and capability, more on training, ship visits and technical assistance or consultations,” said the Philippine Navy chief.

## Aquino, Hollande launch Manila call to action on climate change

By Louis Bacani

MANILA, Philippines - President Benigno Aquino III and visiting French President Francois Hollande on Thursday called on the rest of the world to act on climate change.

Aquino and Hollande launched the Manila Call to Action on Climate Change following their bilateral meeting in Malacañang.

“Our Manila Call to Action on Climate Change represents solidarity in action. We are hopeful that this joint call will help us gain momentum for a truly global initiative to address climate change,” Aquino said.

“This statement, thus, is a welcome call to action: No longer can we be paralyzed by debates over the obligations of individual countries; all of us must do everything we can, in the quickest and most impactful way possible,” he added.

Aquino said nations can unite to overcome the problem or together reap the consequences of apathy.

Citing the destructive typhoons in recent years such as Yolanda, Aquino lamented that the Philippines has found itself at the forefront of climate change.

Aquino said the Philippines intends to attend and



President Benigno Aquino III, right, gestures beside French President Francois Hollande during arrival honors at the Malacanang Presidential Palace, Manila, Philippines on Thursday, Feb. 26, 2015. Hollande is in the country for a two-day visit.

utilize every forum to voice the sentiments of those who are at the receiving end of global climate change.

“We will try to strive a consensus with every entity so that they can contribute the most at the quickest possible time,” he said.

Aquino believes that the effort against climate change is being enhanced currently since first world countries are no longer spared by weather patterns changing dramatically.

“We are hopeful that we will be able to (have) a consensus to push a lot of other countries to maximize their contributions in the effort to combat global climate change,” Aquino said.

The Palace said earlier that Hollande is expected to seek Aquino’s support on the issue of climate change in light of preparations being made for the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties, or COP21, to the United Nations Framework Convention Climate Change in December this year.

French ambassador to Manila Nicolas Hulot said Hollande sees his visit to give a human face to climate change, as the Philippines bears the brunt of dozens of deadly storms such as Typhoon Yolanda.

On Friday, Hollande will visit Guiuan, Samar, one of the areas most devastated by Yolanda in 2013.

## Philippines, France boost ties with signing of cooperation agreements

The Philippines and France on Thursday strengthened their bilateral relations with the signing of cooperation agreements.

The signing of the memorandum of understanding on tourism cooperation and in higher education and research were witnessed by President Benigno Aquino III and visiting French President Francois Hollande following their expanded bilateral talks in Malacañang.

Aquino said the agreement on tourism will allow for the formal sharing of knowledge and best practices in ecotourism and sustainable tourism development, management of tourism destinations, product development, and skills improvement of employees, among others.

“It is also my hope that this will encourage more

of our friends from France to follow the footsteps of President Hollande, visit the Philippines, and see for themselves how it is more fun in our country,” he said.

The deal on higher education and research will foster closer collaboration between students, faculty, experts, researchers, and administrators from both nations and promote joint research in various fields, Aquino said.

Three agreements on transportation and infrastructure projects were also signed between Philippine and French companies: Financing Agreement for the Cebu Bus Rapid Transit Project

Management, operation, and maintenance of the Subic Clark Tarlac Expressway Manila Light Rail Transit Line 1 Extension Project

“Indeed: the enhanced partnership between France and the Philippines has already redounded to great benefits for our people. At the same time, our discussions also covered regional and global issues of mutual concern,” Aquino said.

He also conveyed to Hollande an invitation for French companies to explore investing in the Philippines, particularly in the aerospace, IT-BPM, renewable energy, and infrastructure sectors.

“Filipino workers have proven themselves to possess the skills, loyalty, and drive necessary to spur any industry to success, and given the economic resurgence that our country has experienced these last few years, there is no more opportune time than today to invest in the Philippines,” Aquino said.

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# EXCLUSIVE: Did Bongbong Marcos lie about Oxford, Wharton?

By Marites Dañguilan Vitug

## At A Glance

Senator Ferdinand Marcos Jr lists in his resumé an undergraduate degree from Oxford and an MBA from Wharton Oxford University and Wharton School records do not show any Marcos Jr in their lists of graduates.

Marcos Jr declines to be interviewed

MANILA, Philippines – During his presidency, Ferdinand Marcos sent his only son and namesake, Ferdinand Jr or Bongbong, to prestigious schools in England and the US.

Now a senator, Bongbong Marcos lists in his resumé the results of his overseas education: a bachelor of arts degree in political science, philosophy and economics from Oxford University (1975-1978) and a master's in business administration (MBA) from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania (1979-1981).

29 years after EDSA 1, when his father was deposed by a popular rebellion, Marcos Jr is mentioned as one of the possible candidates in the 2016 presidential elections. If his mother Imelda were to be followed, Marcos Jr would run for president and bring the family back to Malacañang.

Our fact-checking shows, however, that Marcos Jr's claims are false. Oxford University and Wharton School records do not show any Ferdinand Marcos Jr in their lists of graduates.

A visual timeline, posted on Marcos Jr's website, details milestones in his life. It is



Bongbong Marcos

interesting that his grade school years at La Salle Greenhills (1963-1969) are complete with report cards and class photos, but his college and post-graduate years in Oxford and Wharton School, respectively, are empty, except for a single picture of him, in a beret, in the Oxford campus. (READ: What's so special about Oxford, Wharton?)

### 'Unequivocal fraud'

At Oxford, Marcos Jr attended St Edmund Hall, one of its colleges, starting October 1975. He claims to have graduated in 1978 but the 1977-1978 university calendar, which contains the names of all those sitting for their final exams in each subject, does not include him. The calendar, which is filed at the University's Bodleian Library, is accessible to the public.

We sent e-mails inquiring about the status of Senator Marcos to two persons, Professor Keith Gull, principal of St Edmund Hall, and Philippa Machin of the Development and Alumni Relations of the same college. Gull did not reply.

Machin referred our e-mail to Robert Wilkins, a senior tutor of St Edmund Hall, who, in turn, referred us to the university calendar. He wrote us: "Data confidentiality concerns mean that we cannot discuss individual students of the Hall, but Class lists for Final Honour School examinations were historically published in the University Calendar. Past copies of the Calendar are on open shelves in the Lower Reading Room in the Bodleian Library and can be freely consulted there."

Our sources, who commenced at the same college as Marcos Jr in 1975, say that he stayed for only a year. One of them wrote in an e-mail: "It is my understanding that he was sent down (expelled)...Having failed his Prelims (first year exams), Ferdinand Jr never completed his Bachelor degree at Oxford. It is possible that he might have received a face-saving diploma, which is not the degree that he claims."

Marcos Jr's claim of a bachelor of arts in political science, philosophy, and economics, the same source wrote, is an "unequivocal fraud."

### University calendar

We asked Carla Montemayor, a Rappler contributor who lives in London, to check the Oxford University calendar. She visited the Bodleian Library and found printed volumes published annually by the Oxford University Press. Among a calendar's con-

tents are class lists for each course of study during an academic year.

Montemayor explained: "The class list is the roll of students who successfully completed their degrees. This means they have complied with course requirements and passed their final examinations. Each course has Class I, Class II, and Class III students, where Class I (first-class honours) names the students who achieved the highest marks possible in their course."

All Oxford students who are awarded their degrees and qualified for honors at the end of an academic year are included in the class lists of the university calendar.

The class list format goes this way: course, Class I, Class II, Class III, alphabetical list of students in each class: surname, first and second initials, college. Marcos Jr does not appear in any of these 3 classes.

### No MBA from Wharton

The case in Wharton School is similar. Professor Justin McDaniel of the University of Pennsylvania personally checked Marcos Jr's status after we were informed of the university's strict privacy rules. He spoke with the director of the MBA program and this is what he sent us via private message on Facebook:

Marcos Jr entered the MBA program in 1979 and attended until the fall of 1980. However, he withdrew sometime during this period or early spring in 1981 and never graduated. They do not know why. However, Wharton confirmed that Marcos Jr went there but never graduated.

Before we obtained this confirmation, we had already gained access to a comprehensive alumni database of the University of Pennsylvania, as of 2012, and did two searches, one by first name, and the other by surname. The name of Marcos Jr did not appear in both searches.

ia database yields no "Ferdinand Marcos Jr". Rappler file photo

We then sent repeated queries to the alumni office of the University of Pennsylvania but we received this puzzling reply: "Mr Marcos graduated from our Wharton Graduate program in 1981, unfortunately due to privacy rules I am unable to give any further information." The e-mail was sent by a Stephanie Stapleton.

It was then that we asked Professor McDaniel to make inquiries – thus the confirmation from the MBA program director of Wharton.

One question remains unanswered: how did Marcos Jr get accepted to Wharton School without an undergraduate degree from Oxford, as he claimed?

In the Philippines, Marcos Jr is an accepted member of the Wharton-Penn Club, composed of alumni. In 2010, the Club, then led by Peter Coyiuto, honored 4 alumni, including Senator Marcos.

To a certain extent, Marcos Jr's false claims are reminiscent of his father's World War II medals which turned out to be fake. US government documents showed that these had no basis, as extensive research by historian Alfred McCoy and Marcos opposition leader Bonifacio Gillego showed.

Senator Marcos declined our repeated requests to be interviewed, either in person or by telephone. He, however, released a statement Tuesday night, saying his educational records at Oxford and Wharton are "accurate."

He said, "I earned a diploma in political science at St. Edmund Hall, Oxford University in England in 1978." He did not specify it to be a bachelor's degree.

He also said, "I thereafter did post-grad-

Continued on page 8



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## Cavaliers Lead Investigation on Mamasapano Massacre

February 11, Wednesday, was the first day for the House of Representatives to investigate the tragic death of 44 Special Action Force (SAF) on Jan 25, 2015, in the town of Mamasapano in the province of Maguindanao.

The main actors in the investigation of Mamasapano massacre are graduates of the premier military institution of the country - Philippine Military Academy (PMA), known Academia Militar in 1898. Some of the legislators who are interested in knowing the truth on the incident are also alumni of PMA.

Who are these Cavaliers?

### PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE

Police Director General (four star) Alan Purisima (PMA 81) is the former chief of the PNP who resigned after Mamasapano massacre.

Police Deputy Director General (three star) Leonardo Espina (PMA 81) is the Officer-in-Charge of PNP who was out of the loop on "OPLAN Exodus". Espina is a mistah (classmate) of Purisima. He was informed Time-On-Target (TOT) by Dir. Napenas on Oplan Exodus.

Police Director (two star) Getulio Napenas (PMA 82) is the relieved director of Special Action Force (SAF) who has direct hand in the capture and death of international terrorist Zulkifli Bin Hir known as

Marwan. Marwan has \$5M bounty for his capture.

Police Director (two star) Benjamin Magalong (PMA 82) is the current head of Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) of the PNP. Magalong is in charge of the Board of Inquiry (BOI) to investigate the Mamasapano incident.

### ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES



General (four star) Gregorio Pio Catapang (PMA 81) is the AFP chief of staff. Catapang is a mistah of Purisima who was informed by Purisima on Oplan Exodus "Time-On-Target" (TOT).

Lieutenant General (three star) Rustico Guerero (PMA 81) is the commander of Western Mindanao Command (WestMinCom) based in Calarian, Zamboanga City. WestMinCom has direct military control of Region 9, part of region 10, and part of Region 12. Lt. Gen.

Guerero is a mistah of Purisima and Espina.

Major General (two star) Edmundo Pangilinan (PMA 83) is the 6th Infantry Division commander based in Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao. 6ID has military control over Mamasapano.

Brigadier General Carlito Galvez (PMA 85) is the chair of the Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH), an agency that coordinates and facilitates actions between MILF and GPH. Galvez holds the record as the AFP's youngest brigade commander at age 47.

### LEGISLATORS

Congressman Rodolfo Biazon (PMA 61) is a former chief of staff of the

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and a former senator of the republic.

Senator Gregorio Honasan (PMA 71) was a former Commandant of Special Forces School (Airborne) based in Fort Magsaysay, Palayan City in Nueva Ecija. Honasan was military aid of Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile during EDSA I revolution, bloodless revolution in the world. Enrile is under hospital arrest due to non-bailable crime of plunder. Honasan led several

coups against the Cory Aquino administration (1987-1992). The famous coup was named God Save the Queen.

Senator Antonio Trillanes IV (PMA 95) is a former navy officer who was the spokesperson of the Magdalo Group during the Oakwood Mutiny against former president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (GMA) in 2003. Former president GMA is currently under hospital arrest due to corruption charges. Congressman Gary Alejano (PMA 95) is a mistah of Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV. Cong. Alejano is now a representative from the Magdalo Party List.

While most of the legislators are interested and sometimes "blaming" PNP and AFP on the Mamasapano incident, Congressman Alejano was interested on the actions and behavior of the members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in which the Government of the Philippines is in Peace Talk.

MILF is accused of the overkill of 44 SAF troopers. Some of them were still alive but were executed and finished by MILF. Video on this incident was uploaded in social media.

Cong. Biazon lambasted resigned Police Director General Alan Purisima on violating the chain of command. Purisima, on his speech before the members of the august body, negated the theory of Biazon saying the Philippine National Police (PNP) is a civil-

ian organization and the chain of command does not apply to PNP. He further said the chain of command is only applicable to military organization like the AFP.

Panfilo Lacson (PMA 71), former PNP chief and former senator of the republic said that Chain of Command is applicable in PNP. Lacson, on his interview with Pinky Webb at ANC on Thursday explained that the chain of command refers to the vertical and horizontal relationship of officers and men in the organization.

January 12, Thursday, was the 3rd day for the senate to investigate the above mentioned incident. If I'm excited to hear mind boggling comments and questions coming from the legislators and am also interested in listening to the testimonies of resource persons.

Mohagher Iqbal, MILF chief negotiator, is in the senate for the first time to shed light on the Mamasapano incident.

Lastly, I am also interested to read comments of the people in tri-media, including social media, who considered themselves expert after the fact.

*(Gabriel Ortigoza worked at the Philippine Military Academy from 1995 to 2003. His last assignment was at the Academics Group being a member of the Corps of Professors, PMA. He taught subjects at PMA such as Public Policy, Government, International Relation, Human Resources in Management, Principles of Management, and Economics).*

## Give Peace a Chance

By Gabriel Ortigoza

Mindanao, the second biggest island out of 7,100 islands of the archipelago, is located in the southern part of the Philippines. Mindanao, also known as the Land of Promise, has been crying for a solution to its decades old rebellion problems with the Moro groups.

One of the solutions for a lasting peace in Mindanao is the creation of a comprehensive peace agreement between the government of the Philippines (GPH) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). MILF is the biggest threat group in Mindanao.

In 1996 the government, under the Ramos administration, enacted a law that created Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) with Nur Misuari, chair and founder of the Moro Liberation Front (MNLF), as the governor of ARMM however the autonomy failed to address the needs of its people. Misuari was a professor at the University of the Philippines before he founded MNLF on March 18, 1968.

Misuari was accused of corruption and rebellion that led to the collapse of his leadership. Warrant has been issued for his arrest. Misuari has been in hiding ever since.

The people living in Mindanao are longing for a lasting peace in the island. Mindanaoans are tired

and sick of the protracted war between the government and the rebel groups.

One of the courses of actions to attain this elusive peace in Mindanao is to bring together the government and the rebel groups to a table and talk peace.

MILF, a break-away group of MNLF, was founded by an Egypt educated Hashim Salamat of Cotabato province in 1977. MILF is the largest rebel group in Mindanao with a strength of 7,000 armed personnel. Mohagher Iqbal, MILF chief peace negotiator, claimed the group has hundreds of thousands of supporters.

GPH and MILF did agree to talk peace. Framework agreement was approved. Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) was created and more than halfway in the process of making it into reality.

What are the factors and the basis for the creation of an autonomous region?

The 1987 Philippine Constitution provides that there must be an autonomous region for Muslim Mindanao and the Cordilleras. Mindanao has ARMM but it failed to address the demand of the people. People in the Cordilleras voiced via plebiscite their opposition to autonomy thus they have Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR). (N.B.: CAR is an Administrative, not Autonomous Region).

Local government code of 1991

or Republic Act 7160 talks about people empowerment thru decentralization and devolution of power and services. R.A. 7160 is "Federalism" Philippine style.

Mindanaoans need not be afraid of BBL because there is an electoral process that must be followed to hear the voices of the people by virtue of a plebiscite.

Strong opinions are circulating saying the BBL is unconstitutional. For a law to be rendered unconstitutional, the Supreme Court has to decide on it. However the SC cannot rule on its constitutionality because the law shall be enacted first. BBL needs to be enacted to determine its constitutionality.

Truth hurts. The truth is that ARMM is the poorest local government unit in the entire Philippines. On the other hand, revenues coming from Mindanao goes to imperial Manila and more or less a third of it comes back and trickles down to selected few lucky hands.

Development won't happen when there is war. Stereotype says Mindanao is a war zone. The fact is local and foreign investors are afraid to put business in Mindanao particularly in Muslim dominated province, cities, towns, and barangays (villages) because of skirmishes between government security forces and the rebels.

The constitution promotes and protects social, cultural, and religious beliefs of the people provided those are in consonance with law of the land. Social development happens when people are empowered. People empowerment can be achieved when people are given autonomy and are free to participate in nation building.

Infrastructures are vital to development. Farm to market roads and technological infrastructures such as constructing, power plants and lines, high speed internet connection, etc., are needed to be competitive.

We see in tri and social media the video of gun making activities in the ARMM. We need to legalize this gun-making technology to provide livelihood for our Muslim brothers. Once legalized, Bangsamoro people don't need to hide their talents and they can sell their products locally and to international market. Gun making is a big business.

Local autonomy exist when there is international recognition. Tripoli Agreement is one of the basis of the creation of ARMM. Presently, third party monitoring team spearheaded by Malaysia has been active in making peace agreement come into fruition.

The Mamasapano massacre is the turning point of and considered a major obstacle of BBL. On Janu-

ary 25, 2015, 44 troopers of the Special Action Force who killed international terrorist Zulkifli Bin Hir, known as Marwan, a Malaysian bomb-maker expert, were allegedly massacred by members of the MILF, BIFF (Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, a break-away group of MILF), and other armed groups operating in the province of Maguindanao. Marwan is the main suspect in the 2012 Bali, Indonesia bombing where 202 people died. He has a bounty of \$5M.

Government's quick and proper handling on the investigation and finding solution of this tragic Mamasapano massacre will make or break the Bangsamoro Basic Law.

I believe in peace as the ultimate solution to Mindanao problem and for the island to pole-vault into and attain stable politico-legal, socio-cultural, technological, and international development. Please give peace a chance.

*(Gabriel Ortigoza grew up in the town of Mlang in Cotabato province located in Central Mindanao and a witness to the ugly, cruel and evil effects of war in the 70s, 80s, and 90s in Cotabato, Zamboanga, Basilan, and Jolo where bodies of soldiers as well as of rebels were mutilated and heads were decapitated. In fact, while assigned at Camp Asturias in Jolo, Sulu in 1994, Gabriel helped carry the sack where decapitated heads of Philippine Marine soldiers were placed).*





PerryScope

# Obama vs. Putin: Can Obama survive Round 3?

By Perry Diaz

Vladimir-Putin-and-Barack-Obama-angryIt wasn't too long ago when President Barack Obama was the undisputed world leader since the end of the Cold War in 1989; he reigned over the greatest empire the world has ever known. But recently, he had become too complacent lording it over a unipolar world order, confident that the sun will never set on Pax Americana.

But little did Obama know that while he was basking in the glory of American exceptionalism, a militaristic Russia was slowly rising from the ashes of the defunct Soviet Union under the autocratic rule of Vladimir Putin, a former KGB spy of dubious provenance and questionable morals.

Putin came to power in 1999 when then President Boris Yeltsin appointed him as Prime Minister. On December 31, 1999, Yeltsin abruptly resigned and Putin became Acting President. He was elected President in 2000 and reelected in 2004. Constitutionally prohibited to run for a third term, Putin stepped down. Dmitry Medvedev was elected in 2008 and he appointed Putin as Prime Minister.

In 2008, Putin was termed out after serving two terms. He made a comeback in 2012 when he was elected to a third term. It was at that time that Putin had set his sights on the Soviet Union's former republics and satellite states in what he calls as the "near abroad."

An opportunity for Putin to show his mettle presented itself when Obama — in an apparent demonstration of weakness — did not act when Syria crossed the "red line" he drew on Syria's

use of chemical weapons against the Syrian rebels. By failing to respond with the use of military force against Syria's use of banned chemical weapons, Obama sent the wrong message not only to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad but also to the entire world, particularly to al-Assad's benefactor and protector, Vladimir Putin. Putin saw Obama's wishy-washy hesitancy to act as an opening to engage him in geopolitical brinkmanship. And thus far, Putin is ahead in the game.

## Round 1

Their fight began when Putin sent Russian soldiers — with no identifying insignia on their uniforms who came to be known as "little green men" — to Crimea. It didn't take long for Putin to annex Crimea, which stunned the U.S.



Putin's "little green men" in Crimea.

and her NATO allies. However, the U.S. and NATO had a chance to react with force to the Russian incursion — or as some say, "invasion" — but instead they stood down and allowed Putin to grab Crimea. This was a major victory

for Putin because he could now deploy land-based nuclear missiles as well as missile-firing warships and submarines in the Black Sea that could reach NATO's southern flank from Turkey to the Balkans, Italy, Spain and Portugal.

Russia's Crimean territorial grab diminished the U.S.'s credibility as the world's superpower. For the first time since the end of World War II, the U.S. failed to protect her geopolitical interests since the Cuban missile crisis in 1962 when the Soviet Union attempted to deploy nuclear missiles 90 miles from U.S. mainland. Simply put, with Putin breathing down NATO's southern flank, it

puts the 28-member Atlantic alliance on notice that Russia is a power — economically and militarily — to be reckoned with in the Mediterranean Basin.

It did not then come as a surprise when it was announced that Russia is holding bilateral negotiations with Greece, Cyprus, and Egypt that could establish Russia's military presence in the Mediterranean. Right now, Russia and Greece are in the midst of negotiating a financial bailout, which could result in Greece getting out of NATO and the European Union (EU). If that happens, it would break NATO's defenses on her southern periphery.

Russia is also holding bilateral negotiations with another EU member, Cyprus, which is having financial problems. Russia is offering financial aid; however,

she also wants to station air and naval assets on Cypriot ostensibly for "humanitarian" reasons. These Russian bases would be located near the Akrotiri Air

base where British personnel are stationed to support ongoing operations in the Middle East, which makes one wonder: What would Cyprus do in the event Russia and NATO went to war? The specter of the tiny island of Cyprus becoming one bloody — and possibly nuclear — battlefield should be a good enough reason for Cyprus to reject Russian military presence on her territory.

Meanwhile, not too far away, Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi gave Putin a "hero's welcome" in Cairo. They discussed a slew of economic and military deals including the purchase of MiG-29 fighter jets and attack helicopters worth \$3.5 billion. But the irony of this is that the U.S. had been sending billions in military aid to Egypt for the past three decades! Last year, the U.S.'s military aid to Egypt was \$1.5 billion, which makes one wonder if the U.S. were indirectly subsidizing Egypt's arms deal with Russia?

## Round 2

Last February 12, after a marathon 17-hour summit of Putin, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President François Hollande, and Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko in Minsk, Belarus, they agreed on a ceasefire and a number of measures to achieve peace in Ukraine. But no sooner had the ceasefire agreement been signed than Russian tanks, missile systems, and troops crossed the border into Ukraine.

Apparently, Merkel, Hollande, and Poroshenko had played into Putin's game. The ceasefire called for heavy weapons from both sides to be withdrawn from a line drawn dividing the country into two regions — the government-occupied region on the western side and the Donbas region in the east controlled by the rebels. They agreed to establish an "exclusion zone" — 200 kilometers long and 50-70 kilometers wide — separating the two sides, which would be policed by observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and

a "joint contact group" of Russian and Ukrainian military personnel. Heavy weapons would be withdrawn from the exclusion zone; however, the ceasefire agreement allowed armed combatants to stay within their side of the exclusion zone, which is not unlike the demilitarized zone (DMZ) that divided North and South Korea since 1953 when the Korean War Armistice was signed.

But the way Putin played his game is that whether the ceasefire would hold or not, he wins. A stalemate would result in a "frozen conflict," just like what happened in Georgia and Moldova when Putin sent Russian "peacekeepers" — or occupation troops? — to preserve "peace" between these countries and the self-proclaimed republics that broke away.

Evidently, Obama lost Round 2 because he had a chance to take the bull by the horns when the Ukrainian government forces had the upper hand in fighting the Donetsk and Lugansk separatists. But due to Obama's refusal to send lethal weapons to Ukraine to defend her territory, Poroshenko had to "surrender" the Donbas region to the Russian-backed separatists.

## Round 3

After Ukraine, what is Putin up to next? There are strong indications that Putin would try to reclaim the Soviet Union's three former Baltic republics — Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania — and force them to join the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), which Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan formed as an economic union similar to the EU.

Interestingly, at the time the EEU was formed in January 2015, Russia made a proposal to Europe: "Dump the U.S. and join the Eurasian Economic Union." While it may sound ludicrous, the way Putin had been playing his game of "deceive and conquer," it may not be long before some European countries particularly those near Russia's border would consider joining EEU as a means of self-preservation... unless the United States overcomes her fear of a resurgent Russia — whose unpredictable leader Vladimir Putin is bent in reclaiming Mother Russia's glorious past — and use her might to stop Russian imperialism. But does Obama have the cojones to lead?

So far the scorecard shows 2-0 in favor of Putin. Can Obama survive Round 3?

(PerryDiaz@gmail.com)



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# Enduring Freedom or Enduring War?

By Erick San Juan

As I write this piece, the Senate is still investigating (in aid of legislation), on its second day the Mamasapano tragedy, with Senator Grace Poe's committee. Each senator have their own concern of what really happened through their kind of questioning. As I watch the Senate hearing, it came to my mind the big picture which we have to consider in order to understand 'the play'. In this case our problem with the terrorists and bandits in the south.

Through the years there had been many efforts done both by the PNP and AFP to stop the terror acts and other acts of violence against peaceful communities in the southern part of the country. And this same perennial problem is also the reason why the US troops are ever present in the guise of fighting the terrorists. And again, the perennial question – if there is a concerted effort by both American and Filipino troops in the south to fight terrorism, why do we still have terrorists there? And the worst part is, it is known globally that our country is also used as training ground for terrorists from various terror groups. Translation – training ground for state-sponsored terrorists, that is why they are not being wiped out, they are still needed for future false flag and covert operations.

If this is the scenario that is prevailing for several years now, we are really doomed to be the next Afghanistan, or we are presently being mold as the new Afghanistan.

I would like to share here the article "Why the US Wants to Stay

in Afghanistan" by Jack A. Smith (Global Research, January 07, 2014) he writes: "Afghanistan is especially important to Washington for two main reasons.

The obvious first reason is to have smaller but elite forces and surveillance facilities in Afghanistan to continue the fighting when necessary to protect U.S. interests, which include maintaining a powerful influence within the country. Those interests will become jeopardized if, as some suspect, armed conflict eventually breaks out among various forces contending for power in Kabul since the mid-1990s, including, of course, the Taliban, which held power 1996-2001 until the U.S. invasion.

The more understated second reason is that Afghanistan is an extremely important geopolitical asset for the U.S., particularly because it is the Pentagon's only military base in Central Asia, touching Iran to the west, Pakistan to the east, China to the northeast and various resource-rich former Soviet republics to the northwest, as well as Russia to the north."

A Dec.30,2014 report in Foreign Policy by Louise Arbour noted:

"Most countries in [Central Asia] are governed by aging leaders and have no succession mechanisms — in itself potentially a recipe for chaos. All have young, alienated populations and decaying infrastructure... in a corner of the world too long cast as a pawn in someone else's game."

The first reason is identical with the presence of the Joint Special Operations Task Force – Philippines (JSOTF-P) in Mindanao. The Task Force was organized around a headquarters element, temporarily located at Camp Navarro, Zamboanga City, and 3 subordinate regional task forces. Camp Navarro is an Armed Forces of the Philippines facility. These Task Forces are: Task Force Archipelago, based at Camp Na-

varro, Zamboanga del Sur Province; Task Force Mindanao, based at Camp Siongco, Maguindanao Province; and Task Force Sulu, based at Camp Bautista, Jolo Island, Sulu Province.

A handful of JSOTF-P personnel also worked in Manila to coordinate activities with the US Embassy Country Team and AFP General Headquarters. JSOTF-P also includes a Joint Special Operations Aviation Detachment (JSOAD) to ensure special operations forces are able to move freely in country. The JSOAD maintains a small fleet of PC-12 and C-12 fixed-wing aircraft, complemented by Bell 214 helicopters for use in the jungle areas where U.S. and Philippine forces are collocated.

All US forces supporting Operation Enduring Freedom – Philippines operate under the Kapit Bisig Framework, a mutually agreed US and Government of the Republic of the Philippines accord by which JSOTF-P accomplishes its mission through and with its partner forces. JSOTF-P does not engage in combat operations and does not operate from independent locations. Instead they advise and assist Philippine security forces where they are: on Philippine government bases, compounds and outposts in jungle, village, and urban areas. Their efforts include intelligence sharing, support for mission preparations and rehearsal, civil-military and military-information support operations, casualty evacuations, and logistics. (Source: globalsecurity.org)

That explains the presence of US troops in the Mamasapano incident.

Although the US government through their embassy here kept denying the US involvement in military operations, there are evidences on instances that showed their role in the country's military operations, as cited here by the



Wikileaks through the report by Jojo Malig, abs-cbnNEWS.com posted at 09/14/2011:

US Special Forces troops have been directly involved in hunting down suspected terrorists in Mindanao, several diplomatic cables released by anti-secrecy group WikiLeaks revealed.

Cable 06MANILA3401, classified secret and sent August 14, 2006 in the name of US embassy deputy chief of mission Paul Jones, said US Special Forces troops and ships gave "intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance support to the 87-plus maritime interdictions" in Jolo, Sulu during an Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) campaign in the said year against Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) leaders on the island.

It added that this was made possible because the US Navy's Joint Venture and Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines' (JSOTF-P) Mark V special operations crafts and rigid-hull inflatable boats are already fully integrated into the Philippine Navy. The US embassy, however, wanted to hide this from the public.

In the cable's "if asked – press guidance" section, US officials are told to say that "US forces are not directly involved in this op-

eration, but are providing support. Our forces, in a support role, advise, train, and share information with AFP forces."

Another cable, 06MANILA4439, said US troops also helped their Philippine counterparts intercept terrorists fleeing from Jolo in 2006.

"US and Philippine forces worked seamlessly to intercept two vessels (one of them high-speed) attempting to flee Jolo for Basilan," said the confidential cable."

The list goes on and on. If the pretext will really benefit our nation, why not? So we wonder, why the denials?

Secondly, like Afghanistan, we have virtual temporary US military bases here already and increased US troops in rotational basis through the VFA and now EDCA. And the same reason – pundits believe that we are strategically located to serve their purpose of encircling China and the fact that we have so much mineral resources in the south that they wanted to secure.

And some analysts observed that our location is conducive to trafficking of drugs aside from trafficking of terrorists.

Is it true that the US has a secret drone base in Balabac, Palawan? Need we say more?

## Bongbong Marcos

From page 6

uate studies at the Wharton Business School, University of Pennsylvania, USA, taking up Masters in Business Administration. I was, however, unable to complete the course because I was elected Vice Governor of Ilocos Norte, and had to return home to serve my provincemates (1980-1983)."

### 2016 candidate?

Marcos Jr, who is on his first term in the Senate, is among those included in the surveys of Pulse Asia and Social Weather Stations (SWS) on presidential preferences, although he is consistently at the lower end. In a November 2014 poll of SWS, only 3% of the respondents named him one

of the "best leaders to succeed Pres. Noyonoy Aquino in 2016." Similarly, a Pulse Asia poll also of the same month showed that 4% would vote for him as president "if the elections were held today."

He is also on the radar screen for vice president, although he is not a top choice. The Pulse Asia poll of November 2014 showed him to be the 5th choice (8%), tied with Senator Antonio "Sonny" Trillanes.

In the same survey, Marcos Jr is in the magic 12 for senatorial preferences, ranked anywhere from 4 to 10. 40% of the respondents said they would vote for him.

On the 85th birthday last year of Imelda Marcos, the former first lady stressed that her senator son

was "qualified" to contest the presidency.

When asked by reporters, Marcos Jr dismissed his mother's statement as a "dream" and said it was "too early to think about it." – with a report from Carla Montemayor in Oxford, Rappler.com

If you have information to share email [investigative@rappler.com](mailto:investigative@rappler.com).

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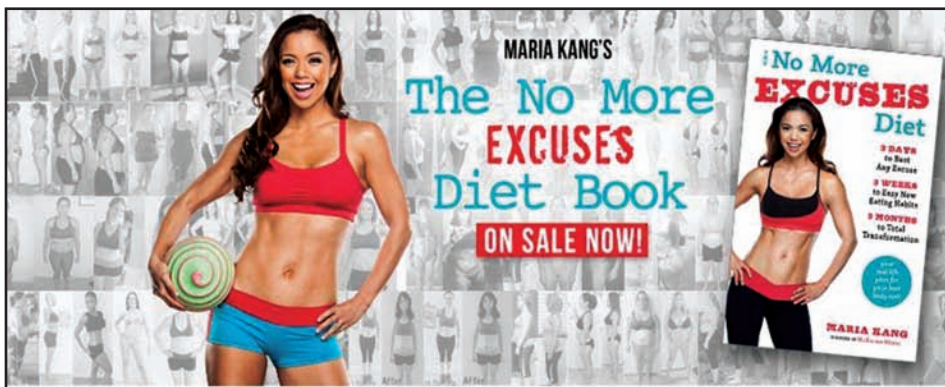
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Tuesday, March 17, 2015  
7:00-9:00pm

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You're invited to celebrate this momentous occasion with Maria. Please bring *The No More Excuses Diet* book to sign and show your support! Appetizers are served, cocktails are available for purchase.

There will be no book sales at this event. Please order online or pick one up at your nearest bookstore (after Mar 10th).

RSVP by March 5th @ [mariamkang@gmail.com](mailto:mariamkang@gmail.com)

## Filipino Women's Club



On Jan 18, 2015, the FWC held their installation of new officers at the Sacramento Ounty Sheriff Community Meeting Room. The room was filled with FWC ladies including their guests. Mrs. Nena Rosales, Past President and Lifetime member was the inducting officer.

The 2015-2016 officers are: Memie Weitzenberg, President; Vickie Debord, 1st Vice President; Zenny Yagen, 2nd Vice President; Cle Sabarre-Ner, Secretary; Rose Basos, Corresponding Secretary; Aida Azurin, Treasurer; Remy Solomon, Assistant Treasurer; Maria Bahoric, Auditor; Sergeants-at-Arm: Meding Mangosing; Judge Dee Brown, Josie Patria, Parliamentarian; Vicky Johnson, Virgie Monteagudo: Public Relations Officers; Ling Avera, Lu Capuchino, Ester Fortes, Julie Oineza, Christine Sison Wiggings; Directors; Nena Rosales, Ester Fortes, Josie Patria, Rose Basos, Sarah Enloe, Judge Dee Brown.; Advisors/Past President; Committee Chairs: Carol Munar, Hospitality; Josie de la Cruz, Sunshine; Rose Basos, Maria Bahoric, Mercy Guerrero, Ways and Means; Virgie Monteagudo, Membership; Beep Alo and Lu Capuchino, Cultural.

During tea time, MC Paradella provided the entertainment to the FWC ladies and Judge Dee Brown, inducted the new members.

Congratulations to Memie Weitzenberg and her officers and wish them the best!



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# Golden State Lions Club hosts Valentine's Dinner & Dance Fundraiser

By Eddie Aducaen

**O**n Friday, February 13, 2015, Sacramento Golden State Lions Club of District 4-C5 hosted a Valentine's Dinner & Dance at the Yosemite Ballroom of the Hilton Garden Inn in Elk Grove. The ambiance was filled with Valentine-themed decor. Walls were trimmed with red and white heart shaped mylar balloons. The chairs were with white linen seat covers tied with red sheer. The dinner tables covered with white cloth were decorated with a vase of red roses as a centerpiece, red chocolate hearts and red dinner napkins.

The intimate affair attended by 130 romantic people was organized by Chairperson Lion Julie Vergara and Co-Chair Lion Jelylyn Feranil. Upon arrival, guests were greeted and presented with Valentine Heart Mardi Gras Beaded Necklaces. A beautiful spread of hors d'oeuvres, which included 2 giant fruit and cheese platters, as well as other finger foods and a chocolate fondue fountain, was situated in the foyer of the ballroom. Everyone was served with a delicious "Taste of Italy" dinner. At the opening ceremony, the invocation was presented by Immediate Past President Lita Castellano. Club President Eddie Aducaen served as the Emcee for the evening. Lion Juliet Suarez, who is a vocalist, songwriter, guitarist, provided the DJ music and also sang during dinner.

Lions dignitaries who were present that evening include Immediate Past Council Chair Derek Ledda, Past District Governor Don Ring, Past District Governor Carol Ring, Cabinet Treasurer Sarah Enloe and Sacramento Region Chair Cecille Baylon. Ambassador and Mrs. George Aducaen, Jr. also graced the occasion with their presence.

Later that evening, a dance number was performed by Lion Eddie Aducaen, Lion Julie Vergara, Lion Kristine Aducaen and Lion Fe Alvarez. They danced to "Love is in the Air," the theme



Love is in the air, dance number performed by Lion Eddie, Julie, Kristine and Fe.



All dress in red Kapitbahay Dancers.



Club President Eddie Aducaen, Immediate Past Council Chair Derek Ledda, Sacramento Region Chair Cecille Baylon, Kristine Aducaen, Caroline Kang.



Best Dressed, Curtis Morelli and Lena Kahue



Best Dancers, Ray and Julie Oineza



Valentine King and Queen George and Alma.

song of the event. Afterwards, Kapitbahay Dancers also performed a dance number to the song, "Lady in Red." Lion Eddie Aducaen performed some love songs, while couples danced. A special guest, Tony Waterford, serenaded everyone with his rendition of "Let's Stay Together."

Managed by 3rd Vice President Lion Emilee Vergara, there was Opportunity Drawing for several Gift Baskets filled with wine, wine glasses, chocolates and other goodies donated by the Golden State Lions membership. A Samsung



(L-R) Lita Castellano, Martin Castellano, Kristine Aducaen, Eddie Aducaen, Cecille Baylon, Felipe Villena, Julie Vergara, Caroline Kang, Emilee Vergara, Juliet Suarez, Frank O'Donahue.

Galaxy Tab4 worth \$300 was the Grand Prize, which was won by Maharlika Lion Leila Pereira. The night was filled with lots of romance, music and fun, as people mingled, took pictures and danced the night away on the dance floor. Not only was there music for entertainment and opportunity drawing, 4 special

contests were held where a secret panel of judges selected 4 couples to be named as the Best Dressed Couple, the Best Dancers of the Night, the Most Romantic Couple and the Valentine King & Queen. The winners of the 4 special contests are Curtis Morelli & Lena Kahue (Best Dressed Couple), Ray & Julie Oineza (Best Dancers of



Lion Sarah, Crisel, Dinnah and Leila.

the Night), Jim & Elvie Spano (Most Romantic Couple), and George & Alma of Kapitbahay Dancers (Valentine King & Queen). Each of the 4 winning couples received \$50 gift certificates that were donated by

1st Vice President Lion Caroline Kang and Lion Carmie Smith.

This Valentine Dinner & Dance was one of many successful fundraisers sponsored by the Golden State Lions Club. Other fundraising events were the Annual Halloween Costume Dinner Dance last October and the Annual Christmas Caroling last December. Their next fundraising event will be a Classic Car Show on Sunday, April 12, 2015 co-sponsored by Elk Grove Ford and the Valley Hi Lions Club. The monies raised from these fundraisers will be used towards the club's several medical missions and projects throughout the year.

The Golden State Lions Club will conduct its next Surgical/Dental/Medical Mission that will take place from April 13 to April 17 at Virac, Catanduanes, Philippines.

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# A Letter to Philippine Fiesta from Chi Rho Omicron XPO

By Dale Esperante

I hope it's not too late to submit the pictures for the petition signing event yesterday. We had a very successful turnout, collecting almost 500 signatures from sac state college students.



I also want to give credit to Mark Carnero, a teacher and representative of the Sacramento City Unified School district who is spearheading the campaign by putting this event together.



I met with him in the beginning of the month and he told me about his plan to host a day of solidarity with the ethnic organizations on campus to show their support for the importance of ethnic studies, including Filipino American culture, being integrated into the high school curriculum.

This is an important cause that resonates deeply within our fraternity. Too many kids these days grow up not knowing where they really came from. It's an issue of self-identity and learning about your roots and your cultures that I believe is significant in every aspect. It was from there that Chi Rho

Omicron began to personally contact every ethnic fraternity and sorority on campus and promote this ethnic studies movement throughout the entire month.

Together with Mark Carnero and his high school students we were able to collect almost 500 signatures within the short amount of time we were able to host the petition signing. Multiple ethnic organizations from the United

Fraternity Sorority Council (USFC) were present to show their support. Chi Rho Omicron (XPO) is a Filipino-based fraternity at Sacramento State University that strives to promote the understanding, enrichment, and appreciation of the Filipino culture. Thanks again! B.K. Evangelista Chi Rho Omicron XPO President 707.334.7740 bk.evangelista@gmail.



# Nellie Umali installed as the new president of Filipino Family Fraternity for 2015-2016



The Filipino Family Fraternity elects new officers for 2015-2016 term on January 10, 2015 at Casa Ignacia RVMS residence. It was officiated by Father Joel Martinez pastor of St. Paul Church Sacramento, CA.

### Officers 2015-2016

- Nellie Umali - President
- Memie wietzenberg - 1st Vice President
- Vicky Johnson - 2nd Vice President
- Rose Basos. - Secretary
- Cleo Sabarre-Ner - Assistance Secretary
- Mercy Guerrero - Treasurer
- Ray Oineza - Auditor
- Esther Mros. - Assist Auditor
- Carol Munar, Lourdes Belasco. - Pro
- Estela Rabara, Edna Villanueva - Social Managers
- Segundo Azurin, Paul Cordero, Dr. Billy Monteagudo, Norm Johnson, Alex Avera, Melchior Munar, Richard Sexton. - Peace officers

### Board members

- Long Avera, Bennett Borrromeo, Divina Borrromeo, Julie oniza, Linda Cordero, Naty Fontillas, Remy Mangosing, Linda Gibson, Tess Larot Adeline Fernandez, Linda Deang, Aurora Ramos, Rose Tarubac,

### Advisors

- Aida Azurin, Maria Bahoric, Nena Rosales
- Parliamentarian - Josie patria
- Spiritual advisor. - Sr. Josie Tanodtanod
- Spiritual chaplain
- Rev. Fr. Joel Martinez

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## Maharlika Lions Club Crab & Shrimp Feed

**March 7, 2015 6pm**

St. Anthony Parish Community Center  
660 Florin Rd. Sacramento, CA 95831  
Carle and Sarah: 916.769.8601

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## Happy Birthday Stanley!



Stanley and wife Edna with family and friends from the community.

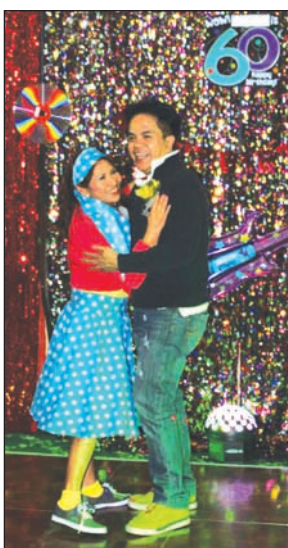
By Dale Esperante

The long awaited surprise party organized by Edna Villanueva for her husband Stanley was a blast on 31 Jan 2015 at the Hilton Gardens Express in Elk Grove.

Helped by family and friends, Edna managed to keep the party a secret from Stanley until the very moment he stepped over the threshold of the venue. Past the threshold, he was showered with hugs and kisses from Edna and members of his family and friends.

Estela Rabara emceed the evening's affair with the help of a very entertaining DJ named Rolly Wagas. Memie Weitzenberg, a close friend of the family, requested yours truly to say a short prayer of blessing before dinner. Stanley is truly blessed to have the love of his wife Edna, and their children: Sherwin, Michael Stanley, and Eloise. Stanley and Edna are also blessed with grandchildren: Gavin, Gabriel, Gian, Giannah, Lulu and Hannah.

The birthday celebrant also took a moment to thank all the attendees for their part in giving him quite a surprise. Stanley is a U.S. Navy veteran and now a Navy civil service employee. He shared that he drove directly from work with friends thinking they were attending someone else's party. Stanley looked truly surprised and blessedly grateful when he arrived. The dinner was catered by South Villa Restaurant. The extended buffet table in the serving hall was spread with endless trays of



sumptuous dishes.

At the end of the party, there was an abundance of extra goodies carried by guests in take-home boxes. Dances, songs, and games filled the evening's program.

Outfitted accordingly, Edna and her friends Fe Alvarez, Rosie Sloan, and Alvin Sisayan performed a dance number to the tune of Elvis's "Don't Be Cruel." Of course Lilia Rivera and the Kapitbahay dance performers also took part in the entertainment. Remy Solomon, Rolly Wagas, Eddie Aducaeyan, and Ed Pabalate gifted the audience with their singing skills. Estela succeeded as Master of Ceremony extraordinaire, and the same praise can be said for DJ Rolly.

The greatest accolade goes to Edna for surprising her loving husband Stanley with a lively successful birthday party!

## Celebration of life... Victorio Serquina Descargar

On February 21, 2015, Mercedes, May, Bernadette Descargar and Monette Stevens invited family and friends to honor the life of Victorio Descargar- beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother, uncle, friend and honorable Navy Seaman at the American Legion Post 604 Hall.



By Bernadette Descargar

On the evening of the celebration, the room was bustling with activity, laughter and smiles of family and friends as they all gathered for a rosary and dinner reception in honor of Victorio Descargar.

Music and the aroma from the multiple buffet tables filled the Hall and to the surprise of those in attendance, The Sinag-tala Children's Ensemble provided additional entertainment. The evening of food, music and togetherness was symbolic of the life of a gregarious man who loved to celebrate with his family and friends.

"Today is a day that we honor Victorio Descargar. Although a year has passed, there has not been a day that has gone by that his smile, laugh, lessons and love of life have not been remembered by his family and friends.

This year has been difficult as we have all missed him dearly but it is because of all of you, family and friends that have allowed us to not only grieve with your support but to continue to maintain his strong value system and positive attitude as we live each day in his honor. Knowing our dad, he would not want us to be sad. Rather than grieving the loss of a great man, we ask that you celebrate that this was a year that Dad felt no pain and was no longer sick.

He is now living an eternal life of doing the things that he loved to do most which was watching over Mom, my sisters and his grandchildren and visiting with his family and friends."

They say it takes a community to raise a child but we must not forget that it is also that same community that helps mourn the loss and celebrate the life of a loved one. You have been our community and for this we are eternally grateful.



Bernadette honoring her father, Victorio Descargar.



Descargar Family



The Sinag-tala Children's Ensemble

■ Birthdays



CHRISTOPHER ABAYA  
MARCH 9



JOJO ABAYA  
MARCH 20



ANTONIO ABAYA  
MARCH 4



MARIEL S. MONTERO  
MARCH 18



ESTELA RABARA  
FEBRUARY 25



SEGUNDO AZURIN with wife Aida  
MARCH 29



MARIA ERESPE with hubby Carlito and sons Christopher and Carl Jr.  
MARCH 16



JOHN and AUBREY ABAYA  
6th Wedding Anniversary, February 28



DR. TONY and REMY SOLOMON  
34th Wedding Anniversary, February 17

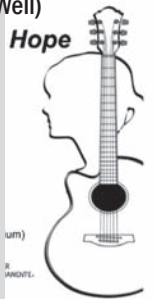
Anniversary

Calendar of Events

**MARCH 7, 2015, SATURDAY**  
Maharlika Lions Club  
CRAB & SHRIMP FEED  
6 pm - 11pm  
St. Anthony Parish Community Center  
660 Florin Road, Sacramento CA  
Carle & Sarah - 916.769.8601



**MARCH 8, 2015, SUNDAY**  
Esperanza Means Hope  
A play in one act by Conrad Panganiban and Gladys Imperno Acosta  
Directed by Nicole Limon  
Cal. State University Sacramento  
6000 J Street (Inside the Well)  
FREE Admission  
916.428.3271  
www.my-sister-house.org



**MARCH 28, 2015, SATURDAY**  
PANGASINAN ASSOCIATION  
of NORTHERN CALIFORNIA  
65th Anniversary Dinner & Dance  
6 pm - 11pm  
Jose Rizal Community Center  
7230 Florin Mall Dr. Sacramento, Ca  
Aida - 916.686.9886  
Mercy - 916.266.1923



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# SOJOURN: First Day in America

By Dale Esperante

There are memorable places and times that are indelibly marked in the calendar of our lives. On a foggy spring day in 1965, the ocean liner SS President Wilson sailed under the Golden Gate Bridge entering San Francisco bay.



On the top deck of the ship, a 12 year old boy marveled at the majestic sight of the world-famous bridge. It was a very cool moment for the boy in more ways than one. The fresh chilly wind that met him as the ship approached the port of San Francisco was a welcomed change. He felt the change, as the memory of the warm humid wisp of a breeze that bade him farewell in Manila soon faded. At disembarkation, the boy and his two siblings were ready and excited to meet their stateside family.



Travelling on an ocean liner for about a month gave the newcomers the advantage of adjusting to the time zone difference. There was no jet lag to speak of. They were well rested and had none of the weary effects experienced by today's jet travelers. Papa and the families of kuya, ate, aunts and uncles were the welcoming party. Their hugs and kisses welcomed the newest arrivals.

Now reunited, the family felt like strangers to each other caused by the years of separation. Many more will migrate and next time, the boy will be part of the welcoming party. A convoy of big American cars transported the family to the heart of San Francisco. To the boy,

the spacious and luxurious interior of the car felt so different from the jitneys and smoke belching buses he had grown accustomed to in the islands. As a welcome feast, the family treated the new arrivals to Morse' or Moore's (memory lapse on the spelling) Cafeteria near the cable car stop on Powell Street.

Mash potato, prime rib, mixed vegetables, milk, chocolate milk, and jello/cake/pastry for dessert were enjoyed by the family. Sadly, this cafeteria where the boy ate his first meal in America has long been replaced by businesses catering to tourists. It's regrettable that some places in the past can only be revisited in the treasure vault of our fond memories. Woolworth, Emporium, Macy's for Men,

and J.C. Penney were the big name department stores in the vicinity of Powell and Market Streets at the time. From the second floor window of the restaurant, the sidewalk below seemed like one giant pulsating organism as people jostled to and fro.

The final stop of the cable car at the end of Powell Street could also be viewed from the same window. Arriving passengers got off the cable car looking exhilarated while departing passengers waited patiently for their turn to ride. When it was the departing passengers turn to get on, everyone was accommodated. Nowadays, it takes minutes stretching to an hour of waiting to get on a cable car. Back then people can hop in on the cable car anywhere

on its route as long as it was stopped.

Watching the lively people enjoying the downtown vibe outside, walking seemed like a good idea after a hearty lunch. Being practical, the family decided to do the walking in Chinatown where they could also shop for items needed for dinner. The route to Chinatown included driving through a tunnel. Wow (the boy thought)! He never experienced riding a car driving through a long tunnel in Manila. He thought of the new pedestrian underpass in Quiapo. Arriving in Chinatown, the boy and his big brother were instructed to stay near the parked cars as the elders left for some serious shopping. Excited to be left on their own, the two started to wander around

the nearby alleys. Before they knew it, they were lost walking through the tunnel where they had driven through an hour ago. Where do we go from here (the boys wondered)!

The family somehow tracked down the lost brothers and rescued them from the clutches of the darkness descending upon the strange new city. Next stop, the Avenues. A three story Victorian house, complete with a garage, seemed like a mansion to the newcomers. In the back of the house, a narrow backyard stretched so deep that if it were in the old neighborhood of Manila, two more houses would occupy that space. The time to enjoy the comfort of the house was short lived though, because it was just a stopover for the newcomers.

The final destination was still hours away. In the boy's

calendar, the first day in America spent in San Francisco was the beginning of his journey in life as a Filipino-American. Frisco is a vertical city in more ways than one with giant skyscrapers, monolithic bridges, Twin Peaks, Coit Tower, Embarcadero, a windmill, cable car hills and more thrills. In a way, the verticality of the city represents a leap of faith like the growth of the boy in this country.

In music by artists such as Tony Bennett, Otis Redding, and Scott Mackenzie, among others, the rhythm of the city is legendary.

Almost 50 years later, that first day rhythm of the city by the bay is still vividly remembered by this writer.

## Komiks Buhay Pinoy by Dave San Pedro




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## The Good In Us

By Gemma Nemenzo

When we were conceptualizing what was to become the most successful and long-running children's show, "Batibot," on Philippine TV in the early '80s, we had a lot of discussions on what being Filipino really means. "Batibot," which was created under the guidance of the Children's Television Workshop, producer of "Sesame Street," was an educational program, not just an entertaining one. As such, all segments were written to meet curriculum goals, foremost of which was to inspire children to take pride in being Filipino.

We had meetings and consultations with academics, media practitioners, psychologists, writers, artists, parents, even children, on what being Filipino meant to them. The answers we got spanned a broad spectrum of opinions and observations, from the mundane to the heretical, from the pious to the irreverent. I wish I had kept my notes from those sessions because I remember being awe-struck by the realization that our culture – our sense of being – is so much richer and broader than what we thought we knew when we started our research.

I remembered all these when I was chatting with some old friends and someone opined that with millions of our countrymen now scattered all over the globe, we should start redefining being Filipino beyond geography or nationality and look at ourselves as global citizens. This got us to thinking, what traits or behavior do we carry with us even as we leave our native land and integrate ourselves into entirely different societies and assume changed personas? What makes a Filipino still a Filipino even as he speaks a new language, acquires a different citizenship and changes the way he sees his future?

Yes, we will always be hospitable to strangers and respectful to elders. No matter where our psyches may stray there will always be a part of us that submits to a Higher Power. Throughout our lives there will always be a select few we owe an unending debt of gratitude to. The parents among us will do anything to give our children a good education. We are generally a happy bunch and we smile probably more than most people of other ethnicities. But there are other traits or instinctive behavior that may or may not be uniquely Filipino but are so ingrained in us that it isn't a stretch to claim them as our own.

We have a natural tendency to greet people we haven't seen for some time by commenting on their body shape. Tumataba ka yata, you seem to have gained weight, or payat ka ngayon, you have lost weight. Someone told me that before we were "Americanized" (i.e., became too conscious about body weight), being plump was considered a sign of prosperity and health. Thus when someone says you have added pounds, you ought to be flattered. Among us, we take such greeting lightly, but say that to a non-Filipino (especially one trying to lose weight) and he'd feel insulted.

We're irrepressible matchmakers. When we find out that someone is unattached, the Rolodex in our mind starts whirling, trying to find a good match. We don't bother to find out whether that person is interested in meeting someone or if he/she even wants a partner. It doesn't even occur to



The children's show "Sesame," the forerunner of "Batibot"

us to ask what gender that person prefers. We just assume that he/she is lonely and dying to meet someone, anyone of the opposite sex, even that rogue who has been discarded by all the other singles we know.

We're just as irrepressible as gift-givers. We invented the balikbayan box and keep discount stores in business. Whenever we travel, we spend a lot of time shopping for pasalubong, souvenirs for almost everyone we know, even those who had no idea that we went away. I will not even venture into the whys and wherefores of this endearing but often impractical tendency of ours. I prefer to think that we are always conscious of sharing our bounties in whatever way we can.

We're probably the world's ultimate snackers and food figures in everything that smacks of a good time or even a sad time among us. A few years ago, we visited Ho Chi Minh City during the Tet (Lunar New Year) festival. We joined the throngs of revelers that packed the major boulevard of the city. There were flowers all around and parades and street dancing. The collective energy was intoxicating. But we couldn't fathom why, other than the traditional tasteless Tet rice cakes and a few stalls selling soda and water, there were no food vendors around. Can you imagine a street festival in the Philippines without the bananaQ, the barbecue, fishballs, peanuts frying in oil, corn on the cob wrapped in burlap, taho (sweet tofu) and balut (duck egg)? Neither can we.

Establishing kinship with a fellow Filipino we have just met is instinctive for us. After we find out each other's full names, we ask which province the other guy is from, where he went to school, whom they are related to. Pretty soon, we would be able to dig out a nugget of information that connects us (as in my sister-in-law's cousin went to the same school as your brother) no matter how flimsily, and somehow that transforms the stranger into a friend. Among Filipinos, two degrees of separation is often enough. The concept of intruding into another's privacy by asking prying questions is too alien for us.

Many lament our "crab mentality," how we pull others down and tear each other apart with our cattiness and petty jealousies. But these negativity are not ours alone. Other cultures complain about this too. What we often forget is that, notwithstanding the criminals and evildoers among us, we common folk look out for each other. For as long as our lives and families are not threatened and our sense of self is not compromised, we are naturally friendly and generous especially to our compatriots. If you don't believe me, try speaking in Filipino to the girl behind the counter at a pastry shop. With a gesture of kinship, chances are you'll get an extra éclair.

## Boracay named best beach in Asia



Boracay beach

Boracay was named as the best beach in Asia yesterday by the world's largest travel website, TripAdvisor in its 2015 Traveler's Choice Awards.

Two other beaches in the Philippines also were named in Traveler's Choice Awards top 25 beaches in the world. They are Yapak Beach (Puka Shell Beach) also in Boracay, Aklan ranking fifth, and the Secret Lagoon Beach in El Nido, Palawan ranking 16th.

Boracay's White Beach received the top rank for its "calm, warm waters, gently sloping sand," which the site described as "very relaxing" and "possibly the most beautiful beach in Asia."

The site also noted that the best time to go to Boracay, which has also

been dubbed as Asia's 24/7 Island, was during peak season on the months December to May.

### TRAVELERS' REVIEWS

The Department of Tourism (DOT) on its official Facebook and Instagram accounts welcomed the country's newest achievement.

"What makes this recognition significant is because the list of award-winning beaches is determined based on the quantity and quality of millions of traveler reviews and ratings for beaches on TripAdvisor, gathered over a 12-month period," the DOT said.

"Summer in the Philippines is coming fast and make sure Boracay is in your bucket list," it added. (PNA)



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# Early Action Favors Pacman In Superfight With Mayweather

By Joe Fortenbaugh

While the unblemished record and pound-for-pound king of the ring moniker belong to the loquacious and flamboyant Floyd Mayweather, Jr. (47-0, 26 KOs), the initial wave of betting action for the undisputed champion's May 2 bout with Manny Pacquiao (57-5-2, 38 KOs) has heavily favored the Filipino sensation riding a three-fight win streak.

Officially announced to the world on February 20, the welterweight super-fight scheduled to take place May 2 at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas between the most recognizable fighters on the planet hit the board at the Westgate SuperBook with the undefeated Mayweather listed as a -275 favorite and Pacquiao posted as a +235 underdog. But an early onslaught of Pacquiao money forced a quick adjustment to the betting lines.

"The early action has been heavily weighted in favor of Pacquiao," Westgate sports book assistant manager Jeff Sherman told The Queensberry Rules. "We took limit bets [\$10,000] on Pacquiao at +235 and +225 to drive us to the current price of Mayweather -240 and Pacquiao +200."



Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather

Sherman went on to state that 90 percent of the betting slips the Westgate sports book has already written were in support of Pacquiao.

Similar betting activity to what the Westgate has experienced took place offshore as well.

"My boxing staff had this line out for years, but when they made it official, our action went ballistic," Peter Childs, the Head Supervisor of Risk Management at Sportsbook.ag told The Queensberry Rules. "We had Mayweather installed as a decent favorite of -300, but since the official announcement it's been all Pacman money over the past three days. We've been steadily going down on our odds from -285 to -280, -275 all the way down to where we're at -245 on Mayweather and +205 on Pacquiao."

While there are a variety of reasons why Pacquiao is feeling the love at the betting windows this far in advance of the fight, the most likely is that sophisticated bettors are taking advantage of the fact that the wagering public has a strong distaste for Mayweather. This hatred generally manifests itself in bets against the undefeated fighter on fight night, which forces sports books to alter their lines in an effort to balance out the action by enticing more Mayweather action. As a result, these sophisti-

cated bettors are wagering on the idea that a price of Pacquiao at +235 or higher is the best the market will have to offer, meaning there will never be a time the "Filipino Flash" offers more betting value than now.

"From all early indications, the public is going to hammer Pacman in this fight, but we believe Mayweather is the side the wise-guys are going to support," said Childs. "I believe sharp money is just waiting for the betting public—who love betting the underdogs in major fights—to drive this price even further down. I'm not sure how much lower this price gets, but the one thing we do know is that we'll be going into this fight needing Mayweather."

Approximately six years in the making, the long-anticipated showdown between two of boxing's most legendary superstars will result in a financial windfall for the city of Las Vegas, with the cheapest tickets going for no less than \$1,000 apiece and ringside seats expected to fetch in the neighborhood of \$5,000, grossing the host property a gate of roughly \$40 million. Additionally, hotel rooms located elsewhere on the Las Vegas Strip that would normally command \$300 on a Saturday night are currently going for \$800.

"This the most action I've ever seen this far in advance of a fight," said Sherman. "Along with breaking economic figures for the city, this fight will break records in the sports books as well."

Top Rank Founder and CEO Bob Arum told ESPN 1100 in Las Vegas on Monday that only those with a credit limit of \$250,000 or more at the MGM Grand would be eligible for comped tickets to the fight.

Those priced out of attending this historic showdown in person can anticipate spending in the neighborhood of \$90-\$100 to watch Mayweather and Pacquiao square off on pay-per-view.

## Floyd Mayweather-Manny Pacquiao: Three Reasons Why Mayweather Will Win

By Josh Katzowitz

Floyd Mayweather will surely beat Manny Pacquiao when the two finally meet in their long-awaited matchup May 2 in Las Vegas. Of that, we can be sure — unless, of course, you read something that says the exact opposite.

Though Mayweather, who's long been considered the best fighter in the world, has been accused of being frightened to put his 47-0 record (with 26 knockouts) on the line against Pacquiao (57-5-2, 38 KOs) — who is still a legitimate top-five pound-for-pound fighter — he's finally signed his name to a fight that will be one of the biggest, most-hyped and most-lucrative fights in boxing history.

Make no mistake, though. Three months after meeting for the first time in person at a Miami Heat basketball game, a meeting which helped lead the two to finally agree to this fight, Mayweather will beat Pacquiao (probably by unanimous decision). Here are three reasons why.

1. He's faced all different kinds of fighters and never lost: Mayweather has faced heavy punchers. He's faced boxers. He's faced boxer-punchers. He's faced unconventional fighters. He hasn't lost to any of them. Pacquiao has a bit of all of the above in him. He has a heavy punch (though it's been nine fights since he actually scored a knockout). He can box or brawl, and the way he throws his punches is rather unconventional. Maybe Mayweather hasn't seen the kind of package of skills Pacquiao will throw at him, but that doesn't mean he can't figure out Pacquiao by the middle rounds. The Mayweather ring intelligence and his crafty defense will help him win the day here.

2. Mayweather is still too slick in the ring: One reason Pacquiao supporters believe their man will give Mayweather his first

loss is because it appears as though the 38-year-old Mayweather is slowing down. His reflexes on defense have always been outstanding — they're what have helped make him one of the most-impressive fighters in boxing history — but he also was hit hard by Marcos Maidana in their two fights (Shane Mosley and Miguel Cotto also briefly hurt Mayweather in their bouts against him). Mayweather's chin has never let him down, but if Pacquiao can connect with something hard — or better yet, a combination of something hard — he could put Mayweather on the floor. But he won't, because Mayweather is still simply too slick to get hit solidly by Pacquiao. He's always known how to avoid danger, and though Pacquiao is probably the most dangerous opponent of his career, Mayweather will keep himself upright.

3. This is for Mayweather's legacy: Although this fight probably should have occurred a half-decade ago when both men were in their primes, this matchup is still significant for Mayweather's legacy. If he would have retired without facing Pacquiao — even if he retired with an undefeated record— his career always would have carried an asterisk. If we're talking about how Mayweather will be viewed in boxing history and if we know that's important to Mayweather himself, it's hard to see him losing to Pacquiao at this point in their careers.

But don't take my word for it. Here's what Mayweather's father and trainer, Floyd Mayweather Sr., had to say about the matchup: "Floyd is smarter than him, Floyd is quicker than him, has more knowledge, and I'm going to tell you this right here: Floyd can't lose to him."

All of which means Mayweather certainly will win. Unless the EXACT OPPOSITE happens.

## ROACH IS 'TRAINER OF THE YEAR' FOR A RECORD 7TH TIME

By Ronnie Nathanielsz

Celebrated Hall of Fame trainer Freddie Roach has won a record seventh Eddie Futch "Trainer of the Year" award from the Boxing Writers Association of America.

Roach's prized possession is eight division world champion Manny Pacquiao whose two victories in a rematch with Timothy "Desert Storm" Bradley and his dominating win over WBO junior welterweight champion Chris Algieri whom he dropped six times en route to a lopsided win and Miguel Cotto's middleweight championship victory over Sergio "Maravilla" Martinez, helped clinch the award for Roach.

Roach had previously won the "Trainer of the Year" award in 2003, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2013.

In learning of the award named after the great Eddie Futch who was Roach's mentor when Roach was fighting and later be-



Freddie Roach

came an assistant to Futch.

Roach said "words cannot express how much winning an award with Edie Futch's name on it means to me. I'd like to thank the BWAA for this honor."

He said "my name may be on the plaque but I am just a representative of the collective hard work and dedication from the most talented and hardest working fighters and assistant trainers in the world. It is a privilege to work with them."

# You Can Go Home Again

By Lorenzo Paran III

One disadvantage of coming over as an adult to live in the US is that it makes adjusting to a different culture just a tad difficult. When you grow up to be a certain age, you get used to doing certain things and dealing with certain people in a certain way. Moving to live in a different country throws everything off. That is why emigrating (whether it's to the US or elsewhere) is not for everyone. It takes a particular breed of people to thrive in new surroundings.

One advantage of coming over as an adult to live in the US is that you don't miss the Philippines too much. This is how I feel. I came here when I was in my early thirties, and by that time I had done much traveling in the Philippines—though, truthfully, not enough. But the thing is, when it comes to traveling—whether it's in a different country or the homeland—it's never enough. I doubt if anyone can visit all the places worth seeing in any one country. Well, maybe if you did that full time, you could—but tell me, who can afford to do that? Even hosts of travel shows on TV must move on.

## But, yes, the Philippines.

I consider myself lucky to have woken up each day of my life until I graduated from high school next to a window that looked out to the beautiful Mayon Volcano, said to be the world's only perfect-cone volcano. It's easy to see why. On a clear day, it really does look like a perfect cone. Although a 1984 eruption left a deep gash on its eastern slope, from certain angles, it has retained its signature shape and ability to take one's breath away.

This was the view from my hometown of Daraga, Albay, a small but bustling municipality about 15 miles from the foot of the volcano. The town is far enough that it doesn't have the large boulders spewed out by the volcano onto closer towns during past eruptions, but it's close enough to get a sprinkling of ash

whenever Mayon wakes up from a slumber. And it's close enough for one to see at night the glow of a lava flow, still one of the best sights anywhere.

And as if that weren't enough, just a hop over to Legazpi City; there's a hill famous in the community because it offers an even closer and higher vantage point for looking at Mayon. It's called Lignon Hill.

Looking back, it really does seem serendipitous that the city that offers the best view of the volcano would also have a hill, the only one for miles in any direction, that provides the perfect viewing platform for sightseers—as if it had all been preordained. It's as if nature said: Here, if you want an even better view of this volcano ("Mayon," by the way, comes from "magayon," the Bicolano word for beautiful), just climb this hill. And bring all your guests, too.

I climbed this hill with my friends when I was young, and a majestic view of the volcano waited for those hardy enough to make it all the way to the top. Incidentally, this hill, since the idyllic days of my youth, has been developed into a fully functioning tourist attraction. A winding road has been carved all the way to the top, where now there is not only a café, but also a zip-line for the "adventurous."

"I consider myself lucky to have woken up each day of my life until I graduated from high school next to a window that looked out to the beautiful Mayon Volcano, said to be the world's only perfect-cone volcano."

I was there in 2010, during a trip to see my hometown, and I thought, Lignon Hill as it stood now, was a far cry from the muddy, lonely hill I climbed in my youth. But then I thought it was but a sign that many things have changed since those days long gone. Another was that I was there not as a young scraggly boy looking for adventure, but a man fully grown, visiting from a distant land.

But the view up to now is the same. Finely chiseled, blue-gray, and majestic in its sheer size, Mayon enchants all lookers and turns them into admirers in a split-second. Incidentally, it's often said that Mayon doesn't just show it-



View of Mayon Volcano from Lignon Hill (Source: Wikimedia Commons. Photo by Tomas Tam)

self to anyone. True enough, like the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, there are days when it sits shrouded in clouds, and tourists wish they would have more luck the next day.

Another nice thing about growing up in the little corner of Bicol that was my hometown was that I was never too far away from the beach. But, of course, almost anyone living in the Philippines can say that because the Philippines is an archipelago: One is never too far from the beach no matter where one is (with the exception, maybe, of the Mountain provinces). I was not too surprised when I first learned that it actually has a longer coastline than the US. It may be hard to believe, but it's true.

I practically grew up on the beach. There's a picture of me as a toddler, standing in the sand in Bacacay, Albay. I am about two years old. That photo could've been taken on any Sunday of that year or the year before or after because that was about how often we went to the beach in those days. The resorts of Bacacay, only about a half-hour drive from where we lived, were a quick and easy getaway from our humdrum lives.

When I was growing up, my family—by which I mean my extended family: my grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, parents, siblings and whoever else happened to be living in our houses at the time (they were all considered family)—was always finding an excuse to drive out to the beach on Sundays. And since we were a large family, that wasn't very hard to do. There was always an occasion to celebrate—someone's birthday or anniversary or graduation—and there were the holidays. And sometimes we went for no reason at all. All it took was

for someone to say "Let's go!" and we went. And once it was agreed that we were going, we all knew what to do. Each household would prepare a dish for 15, 20 or 25 people for that was how many of us usually went. And someone would bring rice and soda, too, and ice. And fruit in season.

Looking back, though, I remember a time—this must've been when I was in college in Manila and would spend the summer back in Bicol—when I went to the beach with my cousins with little more than some snacks and soda or water. But this was no longer the large family outings we had when I was younger, but just a bunch of cousins out for a "joyride." Since there was no place else to go, we went to the only place we knew: by the water's edge, where we could all be carefree for a while.

Back in town and back in school, our skin had varying degrees of sunburn year-round—except maybe during the heavy monsoon seasons, when we didn't go swimming as often ("We'd get wet," someone was always joking).

The nice thing, too, about the Philippines' beaches is that the water is always a nice warm temperature, unlike the ocean water in much of the US, even here in sunny Southern California, where it could be nice and warm out, but in the water, just a tad too cool; where really the time for swimming is just a few weeks out of the whole year. Someone here who'd been to the Philippines described the ocean water there best: He said it's "bath" water. That's it: The Philippines is surrounded by bath water year-round.

In high school, when we were old enough to drive, my friends and I often went to the beach too, this time without our parents, and that was where most of us smoked our first cigarettes, drank our first beers, and heavens know what else we did. And once we almost got into a fight. And we kept going back. Though it wasn't always easy to get hold of a car in those days, we kept going back whenever we could because, well, the beach wasn't school, it wasn't church, it wasn't our everyday life.

And that's probably why I've never passed up a chance to go to

the beach, even now. I'll probably forever associate it with freedom, with the utter lack of things you have to do.

In Rosario, Cavite, where my mom is from and where my brother, sisters and I were sometimes dispatched during the summer when we were growing up, I was lucky to have an uncle who was as crazy about the water as I was. When he wasn't busy he would round up all of us kids, gather some snacks, and we headed off to a nearby beach.

We simply had to cross a river on a bangka to get there so we went three or four times a week sometimes. And we never got tired.

When I was much older and living in Manila you could say I took this beach-going business to a higher level. I went to places like Dumaguete, Batangas, Bataan, Subic and, of course, the mother of all beaches—Boracay.

Here in the US, now that I think about it—I've gone swimming only in the waters off Los Angeles and the nearby cities (Crystal Cove state beach is my favorite) and in icy Lake Tahoe and Yosemite's Mirror Lake. But I have been all over the California coast, from San Diego and Oceanside in the south, up to Malibu, Santa Barbara, Pismo Beach, Morro Bay (where, incidentally, it's said the first "Filipinos" to step in the United States made landfall), Big Sur, Carmel, Pebble Beach, Monterey Bay, Half-Moon Bay, and as far north as Point Reyes National Seashore. My favorite stretch of the coast is where the Pacific Coast Highway looks out to the ocean crashing against the cliffs. For a picture of the sheer rawness of nature, it's hard to beat.

When I go through these places and look at the great blue Pacific, I can't help but think that just on the other side is the Philippines. I've never seen the Atlantic or the Gulf of Mexico, the two other great bodies of water that surround the US. They're definitely on my to-see list.

But after all these years, the beaches of Bicol still have a special place—yes, I'll say it—in my heart. Its sands may not be as white as the sands of Boracay—in fact, when I was there last in 2010, I thought they'd become even darker, soot black. But I know that was just my memory playing tricks on me. When you go away you idealize things. So when you think of the beaches of your childhood, you think of the white sands of other beaches, you think of luxurious, gleaming resorts. And then you go back and find reality is nothing at all like your memory. But it doesn't bother me. Those dark, drab beaches of Bicol, with their pedestrian resorts—just a jumble of huts, really—will always be home.

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## Next to Chiz and Heart, most photographed was Gretchen B

By Alex Y. Vergara

Newlyweds Sen. Francis “Chiz” Escudero and actress Heart Evangelista couldn’t contain their joy, so that they had to share it again at a second and much bigger reception Wednesday night at Blue Leaf Filipinas in Parañaque.

While the couple had 200 guests in an intimate reception that followed their resort wedding last Sunday at Balesin Island Club in Quezon province, this time their invitees in Blue Leaf added up to 1,200.

As expected, it was a marriage of politics and show biz.

Gretchen Barretto, in a printed, Japanese-inspired Balenciaga dress, came with her domestic partner, businessman Tonyboy Cojuangco. Also present were actresses Lovi Poe, Kim Chiu and Iza Calzado

Escudero’s colleagues, Senate President Franklin Drilon, Grace Poe, Tito Sotto, Loren Legarda, Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and Serge Osmeña, were there, as well as House Representatives Lani Mercado-Revilla, Karlo Nograles and wife Marga, Mark Villar and Em Aglipay-Villar.

### Instagram

Beauty doctors Z and Aivee Teo posted an Instagram picture of themselves from the reception. Basketball player Chris Tiu and Inquirer Lifestyle columnists Audrey Zubiri and Reggie Aspiras were also among the well-wishers.

One of the evening’s most photographed women, apart from Evangelista, was Barretto.

It took wedding planner Kutchie Zaldarriaga almost five months to plan the Manila reception.

Instead of going for a different look, Evangelista requested event stylist Badang Rueda to echo the “white and dreamy” theme consisting of dangling and cascading floral and crystal



Heart

arrangements he did earlier in Balesin, said an insider.

### Grand entrance

This time, Rueda had to do it on a grander scale, sprucing up a glass-panel spiral staircase where the couple made their grand entrance.

The actress looked ev-



Gretchen and Lovi poe

ery inch a star in a white strapless tulle number with tiered skirt covered in embroidery and lace appliques by Los Angeles-based Filipino designer Monique Lhuillier. Indonesian Albert Kurniawan did her makeup.

Evangelista wore an embroidered, long-sleeve Grace Kelly-inspired wedding gown by Dubai-based Filipino designer Ezra Santos to her altar date in Balesin three days earlier.

Escudero, the actress’ real-

life leading man, beamed with happiness as he greeted guests in a three-piece suit by Francis Libiran.

Event caterer Bizu prepared a four-course meal, including a main course of beef tenderloin medallion and poached Chilean sea bass. Since it was Ash Wednesday, the hearty combination gave devout Catholic guests an option.

An hour or so before the couple made their grand entrance, word spread across the venue’s outdoor cocktail area that Evangelista’s parents Reynaldo and Cecilia Ongpauco were already in one of the holding rooms upstairs.

Just like in Balesin, the Ongpaucos, who once publicly disapproved of their youngest daughter’s relationship with Escudero, were no-shows. But three of Evangelista’s five siblings were at the Manila reception.

Hoping perhaps that they would show up, Evangelista again reserved two seats for her parents, as she did in Balesin.

President Aquino, Escudero’s good friend and political ally, was unable to attend the event. He was supposed to propose a toast to the couple.

In his place was Philip Escudero, the senator’s older brother and the couple’s best man in their Balesin wedding.

Mr. Aquino was at Camp Crame comforting the families of the slain SAF 44. He finished at nearly midnight, or an hour after the couple had excused themselves from guests.

Also absent was Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, one of Evangelista’s dear friends, who introduced her to the then newly separated Escudero.

The senator’s earlier marriage to former singer Christine Elizabeth Flores was annulled a few years ago. They have two children, Joaquin and Ma. Cecilia.

## Boy, Kris to help Nora with vocal surgery

By Marjorie S. Duran

Actress-host Kris Aquino and avid Noranian Boy Abunda have volunteered to help finance Nora Aunor’s vocal cord operation.

The offer came after Nora related on “The Buzz” that she needed to have it done again.

“Hindi ako nakakakanta. Ngayon, namamaos na naman ako kaya siguro kailangan ko na talaga magpa-opera sabi ng doctor sa Boston noong nagpunta ako,” said she.

Nora, however, shared she’s having difficulty raising money needed for the procedure. To this, Boy replied, “Tutulungan kitang mag-apon. Mag-apon tayo nang sabay,” adding, “Tutulungan tayo ni Kris.”

Kris agreed to pay for Nora’s airfare to Boston while Boy promised to shoulder The Superstar’s hospital fees.

A seemingly overwhelmed Nora asked if the offer was for real and the two hosts readily replied in the affirmative. “Maraming bagay na kaming dalawa ang nagtutulungan talaga,” Boy said.

Kris added, “Making you (Nora) happy will make Boy happy.”

Smitten by Vilma

Ma in the same interview, Nora happily confessed having had a crush on longtime reel rival Vilma Santos when they were younger.

“Paghanga lang,” she explained, eliciting cheers from the audience.

Nora, also known as Ate Guy, recounted she even went as far as to personally send Vilma flowers to express her emotions.

“Ang nangyari, nung magkakilala na kami, nakatira siya sa Hilton nu’ng araw. Lukaret ako eh, bumili ako ng rosas. 7 a.m. andun ako sa lobby ng Hilton, wala pa si Mare (Vilma). Dumating siya alas kwatro na. Biruin mo, from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. naghintay ako talaga para lang maibigay ang rosas. (Pinapasok) naman niya ako (sa place),” Nora narrated.

Kris attested to Ate Guy’s

revelation, claiming how Vilma once told her a similar story. The host quoted Vilma as saying, “Alam mo binigyan niya (Nora) ako ng flowers. Kursunada niya ako.”

Nora added, “Hindi ko naman ikinahihiya ’yun; totoo ’yun.”

Considering herself a big fan of Vilma’s, she related, “Limang beses kung pa-noorin (ko) ang pelikula niya, ’yung ‘Ging,’ ‘Trudis Liit.’ Talagang tumatakas ako sa bahay noon.”



Nora Aunor



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